

*The Tragedy of Hamlet*

O a pit of clay for to be made  
for such a guest is meet.

*Ha.* There's another, why may not that be the skull of a Lawier?  
where be his quiddities now, his quillities, his cases, his tenures,  
and his tricks? why does he suffer this mad knave now to knocke  
him about the sconce with a dirty shovell, and will not tell him of  
his actions of battery? hum: this fellow might be in's time a great  
buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognisances, his fines, his  
double vouchers, his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine  
dirt: will vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases and dou-  
bles, than the length and bredth of a paire of Indentures? the ve-  
ry conveiances of this land will scarcely lye in this boxe, and must  
th'inheritor himselfe have no more? ha?

*Hora.* Not a jot more my Lord.

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

*Hor.* I my Lord, and of calve-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep and calves which seeke out assurance in  
that. I will speake to this fellow: Whose grave's this firrah?

*Clow.* Mine fir, or a pit of clay for to be made.

*Ham.* I thinke it's thine indeed, for thou lyeest in't.

*Clow.* You lye out on't fir, and therefore 'tis not yours: for my  
part I doe not lye in't, yet it is mine.

*Ham.* Thou dost lye in't, to be in't and say it is thine, 'tis for the  
dead, not for the quicke, therefore thou lyeest.

*Clow.* 'Tis a quicke lye fir, 'twill againe from me to you.

*Ham.* What man doest thou digge it for?

*Clow.* For no man fir.

*Ham.* What woman then?

*Clow.* For none neither.

*Ham.* Who is to be buried in't?

*Clow.* One that was a woman fir, but rest her soule, shee's dead.

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is, we must speake by the card, or  
equivocation will undo us. By the Lord *Horatio* this 3. yeeres I  
have took note of it, the age is grown so picked, that the toe of the  
pesant comes so neere the heele of the Courtier, he galls his kibe.  
How long hast thou been a Grave-maker?

*Clow.* Of the dayes i'th yeare I came to't that day that our last  
King *Hamlet* overcame *Fortinbrasse*.

*Ham.*

*Prince of Denmarke.*

*Ham.* How long is that since?

*Clow.* Cannot you tell that? every foole can tell that; it was that  
very day that young *Hamlet* was borne, hee that is mad and sent  
into England.

*Ham.* I marry, why was he sent into England?

*Clow.* Why? because a was mad, a shall recover his wits there,  
or if a doe not 'tis no great matter there.

*Ham.* Why?

*Clow.* 'Twill not be seen in him there, there are men as mad as he.

*Ham.* How came he mad?

*Clow.* Very strangely they say.

*Ham.* How strangely?

*Clow.* Faith een with losing his wits.

*Ham.* Upon what ground?

*Clow.* Why here in *Denmarke*: I have bin Sexton here man  
and boy thirty yeeres.

*Ham.* How long will a man lye i'th earth ere he rot?

*Clow.* Faith if a be not rotten before he dye, as wee have many  
pocky coarces that will scarce hold the laying in, a will last you  
some eight yeere, or nine yeere; a Tanner will last you nine yeere.

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

*Clow.* Why fir his hide is so tan'd with his trade, that a will keep  
out water a great while, and your water is a fore decayer of your  
whorson dead body: here's a skull now hath lyen you i'th earth

*Ham.* Whose was it?

(23. yeeres.

*Clow.* A whorson mad fellows it was, whose do you think it was?

*Ham.* Nay I know not.

*Clow.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue, a pour'd a flaggon of  
*Rhenish* on my head once; this same skull fir, was fir *Toricke's*  
skull the Kings Jester.

*Ham.* This?

*Clow.* Een that.

*Ha.* Alas poor *Toricke*, I knew him *Horatio*, a fellow of infinite  
jest, of most excellent fancy, he hath bore me on his backe a thou-  
sand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is? my  
gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kist I know not  
how oft: where bee your jibes now, your gambles, your songs,  
your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a  
roare?

M

roare?